



2015 Ward 4 Special Election Questionnaire

Edwin W. Powell, Candidate
Ward 4 City Council
Edwin for Ward 4
202-579-9689

1. PUBLIC FINANCING

A number of jurisdictions provide public financing to political campaigns who meet certain requirements. The campaign must receive small donations (as low as \$5 per person) from a specified minimum number of individuals. In addition, candidates must agree to certain conditions (for example, limits on how much their campaign may spend, limits on how much any individual may donate, and a ban on contributions from corporations and political action committees).

As a Councilmember would you vote to establish such a system in DC? Why or why not?

Based on recent court decisions, I do not believe that it would be constitutional to ban campaign contributions from corporations or labor organizations. I think that it is incumbent upon the candidate or elected official to govern themselves accordingly as it relates to contributions and the potential for political 'kick-backs'. The courts have settled the issue regarding campaign finance laws and the guidelines for accepting contributions should be at the discretion of the candidate or elected official.

2. BANNING PAY TO PLAY

In the current Council period, Chairman Mendelson has introduced the *Contractor Pay-to-Play Elimination Amendment Act of 2015*. Instead of using the conventional approach of banning contractors from donating to campaigns, the bill would ban donors from receiving government contracts.

2a) As a Councilmember, will you vote in favor of this legislation?

Yes

2b) What have you done in the past to limit the influence of monied interests in DC government?

While I support limiting how money influences the interests in DC government, I have not been directly involved in any activities opposing this practice.

3. STATEHOOD

When it comes to statehood, politicians and public officials are often long on rhetoric and nearly absent when it comes to doing the work required.



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What is the most significant action you have taken to promote the cause of statehood, and how do you plan to advance the cause as Councilmember?

I support Statehood for the residents of the District of Columbia, but I believe that we have to start with a very strong stance on budget autonomy. Budget autonomy is the first step towards severing the umbilical cord with Congress. I think that the congress and courts would be more apt to support this incremental approach versus the idea of immediate Statehood given the political landscape of Capitol Hill.

4. HOUSING

Mayor Bowser has committed to adding \$100 million to the Housing Production Trust Fund in this year's budget.

4a) Do you stand with the Mayor in her commitment?

Yes

4b) Are there any circumstances under which you would vote for a budget that does *not* include the additional \$100 million? If so, please be specific.

Yes, if in fact there is a situation that would warrant other budget priorities that are beyond the control of the Council. However, absent such an emergency, I believe that the budget should reflect that figure or more to help deal with our city's homeless and affordable housing dilemma.

5. POLICE

The DCFerguson movement was formed to oppose invasive police tactics, particularly jumpouts, targeted to communities of color. DCFerguson demands that the DC Council pass a resolution taking a stand against the use of jumpout squads. See the DCFerguson petition for details: <https://www.change.org/p/councilmember-phil-mendelson-take-a-stand-against-jump-out-squads-in-washington-d-c>

5a) Have you signed the petition linked above? If not, please explain

Yes

5b) Would you support the Council holding a public roundtable on jumpouts?

Yes, I would support the Council holding a public roundtable on jumpouts. Targeting individuals based on race/ethnicity is inherently wrong! However, if officers have probable cause to temporary or permanently detain potentially dangerous suspects based on



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credible information, then tactics should be used to ensure the safety of the officer and the community at large.

6. JOBS

What have you done specifically to help create good jobs with good benefits for Ward 4 residents? If elected, will you introduce/co-sponsor legislation such as [San Francisco's "Retail Workers Bill of Rights"](#) to give workers greater control over their schedules and promote worker education and training?

Yes, I would sponsor and/or support such legislation here in the District of Columbia. To have schedules that prevent them from working other jobs to supplement their salaries of attend classes for career advancement is unfair. There should be fixed schedules that are fair to retailers and their employees.

7. INCOME INEQUALITY

While income inequality is far more than just a local issue, Washington has been ranked fourth highest among major cities in the country in the size of the income gap between upper and lower income residents. Do you think this broad income disparity is an issue the Council can and should address? If so, why, and what specific proposals/steps do you think should be considered? If not, why?

With one of the highest consumer price index (CPI) on the east coast, I think that is in unconscionable that our elected officials believe that \$11.50 is a livable wage. Therefore, I support raising the minimum wage to \$13.00 per hour beginning July 1, 2017 to counter the income inequality and shrinking middle class as a result.

8. DISPLACEMENT

What specific strategies would you endorse as a Councilmember to prevent displacement of residents and businesses in Ward 4 neighborhoods (like 16th Street Heights and Petworth) that are presently experiencing development pressure?

I support giving the elderly tax breaks on property taxes based on an income formula. I also support providing utility subsidies for the elderly. This will allow them to use more of their disposable income for food and prescription drugs. I support the creation of transitional housing for the homeless with mandatory vocational and mental health services for the able body/mind individuals. This approach will ensure shelter and building transferable skills that are sustainable for a lifetime.

I propose using funds from the DC Housing Trust to support initiatives that will serve working families and persons with special needs (the homeless, elderly, persons with disabilities) particularly those on affordable housing waiting list. 75% of units should serve households at or below 50% AMI and 25% of the units should serve households between 51% AMI to no greater than 80% AMI, except for essential worker in workforce housing.



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I support increasing the number of staff in the Office of the Chief Tenant Advocate to handle tenant complaints and ensure that tenants have due process as it relates to the District's housing laws. I will also work to revise the hardship petition application process and make it fair to the landlord and tenants. Finally, I support strong legislation to prioritize and set aside funds to secure a community benefit (affordable housing, education, income equality) from every tax dollar spent on moderate-large projects.